DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 037 123 FL 001 580

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TITLE Old French for Undergraduates at the University of Minnesota, Morris.
PUB DATE [65]
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the 80th Annual Meeting of the Modern Language Association of America, Chicago, Illinois, December 27-29, 1965

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Course Descriptions, *Curriculum Guides, Diachronic Linguistics, Epics, *French, French Literature, Higher Education, Literary Analysis, *Medieval Literature, Medieval Romance, Poetry, Prose, Reading Materials, Romance Languages, Textbooks, *Undergraduate Study
IDENTIFIERS *University of Minnesota

ABSTRACT

Old French for undergraduates, as it is offered to students at the University of Minnesota, Morris, represents a break with tradition. A rationale for the program and course descriptions accentuate benefits accrued from undergraduate medieval studies. Syllabuses for French 80, The History of the Language; French 90, Directed Medieval Studies; and French 61, Survey of French Literature, covering the Middle Ages through the 16th century, further illustrate the nature of the entire program and list the required readings for each course. (RL)

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION

ED037123

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OLD FRENCH FOR UNDERGRADUATES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS

The University of Minnesota, Morris was opened in the fall of 1960 and at present has a student body of approximately 1000 students. It grants only the Bachelor of Arts degree and is the only College of the University of Minnesota whose curriculum is concerned strictly with liberal arts. Since the foreign language program is being developed as a part of that curriculum, its role is twofold: to serve the entire student body by teaching courses which satisfy the language requirement, and to provide majors in French, Spanish and German (beginning in 1966). The student body is comprised roughly of three groups: those who intend to be secondary and primary school teachers, those who plan to continue their formal education, and those who will stop with the B.A. Whatever their vocational goal, the foreign language staff thought it essential that all majors in foreign languages have training in speaking and understanding the language, in reading and writing the language, in the history and structure of the language, and in the literature written in the language.

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With these goals in mind, the course of study leading to a major in French for a student who begins as a freshman is constructed in this way:

First year-

Fall - Fren 1, Beginning French

Winter - Fren 2

Spring - Fren 3 (Harris and Lévêque's book and tapes)

Second year-

Fall - Fren 20, Intermediate French (intensive grammar)

Winter - Fren 51, French Culture and Civilization

Spring - Fren 50, French Conversation

Third year-

Fall - Fren 61, Survey of French Literature (Mid.A.&16th Cent.)

Winter - Fren 62, " (17th & 18th Cent.)

Spring - Fren 63, " (19th & 20th Cent.)

Fourth year-

Fall - Fren 80, History of the French Language
Fren 70, French Literature of the 17th Century

Winter - Fren 81, Explication de Textes
Fren 71, French Literature of the 18th Century

Spring - Fren 72, French Literature of the 19th and 20th Cent.
Fren 92, Directed Studies

The courses listed above are the minimum required for the major in French. This program is designed for a student who comes to college with no previous training in French. If, on the other hand, he comes with sufficient training, he could

be admitted directly into French 20. He would then be able to take one or two more courses in his junior and senior years. One of these might well be Mediaeval Studies.

The role of Old French Literature and The History of the French Language in this program is an important one. Whether the student intends to become a secondary school teacher, go on to graduate school, or discontinue his formal education after graduation, he will have been exposed in some detail to the fact that the French language and literature did not suddenly spring up out of the ground in Molière's time. For the prospective high school teacher this is especially important. In the first place, our young people often arrive in college with the idea that nothing happened in the world before 1776. The best way to correct the situation is to produce a generation of teachers who are well acquainted with the history of Western culture, who will communicate their knowledge and, more important, their appreciation to their students. In the second place, how can a person teach French with any depth if he knows nothing about the historical development of the language he's teaching? For the student who stops with the bachelor's degree studying Old French is all the more valuable. While he will have studied political history, no doubt, these courses might well provide his only contact with the history of language. For the future graduate

student, his introduction to Old French as an undergraduate will most certainly prove valuable.

Every student majoring in French at the University of Minnesota, Morris is introduced to Old French Literature in the Survey of French Literature. The text for this course is Les grands auteurs du programme by André Lagarde and Laurent Michard.[1] Volume one, Le Moyen âge, is used for the first part of the fall quarter. A brief introduction is given and the next five weeks are devoted to a selection of major works of the mediaeval period.[2] The selections are all in Modern French. The additional difficulty of reading Old French is thereby avoided at this point. Throughout the course, the students are referred to Lanson's Histoire de la littérature française[3] and to certain of the more important works listed in Langlois and Mareuil's guide.[4] They are not expected to do a great deal of outside reading, but are required to be familiar with the material in Lanson on each author and are encouraged to peruse the general works on the period that have been pointed out to them.

The next point at which the student contacts Old

[1]Paris, 1963, 5 vols.

[2]Syllabi of Fren 61, 80 and Mediaeval Studies are included at the end of this paper.

[3]Gustave Lanson, Histoire de la littérature française(Paris, 1955).

[4]Pierre Langlois and André Mareuil, Guide bibliographique des études littéraires(Paris, 1960).

French is in French 80, "The History of the French Language". The first week and a half is devoted to the external history of the language and a review of the essential characteristics of Classical Latin. The remaining eight weeks are devoted to French phonology, morphology and syntax. The principal text for the course is Alfred Ewert's The French Language.[5] The instructor bases his lectures on the outline of the book, but has to avoid becoming involved in too much detail. Undergraduate students find Ewert quite readable provided the instructor helps them keep on the main track.

The course in Mediaeval Studies, whether given as a tutorial or as a class, is intended to be a good deal more intensive than the corresponding segment of the survey course. Here the senior student, having studied the history of the language, reads selections from Bartsch's Chrestomathie de l'ancien français in Old French.[6] His outside reading is much more extensive and he is expected to do one short paper during the term. At first the reading goes rather slowly, but having already had experience with Old French, he soon is able to read fairly easily. The scope of the literature is presented to the student through a selection of representative works taken from the anthology.

The reaction of the faculty to this program when it was proposed for adoption was quite mixed. The principle ob-

[5]London, 1943.

[6]Karl Bartsch and Leo Wises, eds, Chrestomathie de l'ancien français, New York, 1958.

jections were these: Is it possible for a student who does not even know Modern French very well to really learn anything about Old French; wouldn't the time be better spent studying Modern French? Why is so much of the program devoted to events before 1600? Why should the student study the history of the language at the undergraduate level; if he doesn't go on it will be useless and if he does he'll have to do it all over again in graduate school?

We found that upper division (junior and senior) students were indeed able to learn to read Old French fairly well in a short period of time. The reason is simply that they had already studied French for at least two years in a very intensive way and the differences in form do not constitute an impassible barrier at all. A great deal of positive transfer takes place from the study of the modern to the study of the older forms. It is no doubt true that the student's knowledge of Modern French is imperfect, but the three quarters spend studying Old French language and literature are quite valuable to him and well worth the time as well. In any case, his study of Modern French is not interrupted because he continues with other courses concurrently which deal with more recent periods. An introduction to the Middle Ages is valuable to the student because without it he is unable to understand the content and form of the rest

of French Literature which grows out of it. The objection that the student would spend too much time on the period at the expense of other periods doesn't hold up because he would normally only spend 9 hours out of 36 on Old French. This is a fair share for the thousand years that shape the literature he's interested in. Finally, whether or not his study will be "useful" to him could be explained in the same way that a "liberal education" is justified to start with.

The results of the first trial of the program were gratifying. Six students took French 80 (The History of the French Language) in the spring of 1965. At first they were baffled and discouraged by the unfamiliar terminology and by the apparently unconnected nature of the phenomena they were studying, but after the first three weeks a pattern began to emerge and they became quite enthusiastic about the course. In the end they showed considerable talent in working out etymologies, proved to be conversant with the external history of the language, and showed increased enthusiasm for their study of French in general because of their broadened perspective.

Obviously an introduction to the Middle Ages in the survey course, a rapid course in the history of the language and a one quarter seminar in Old French Literature cannot

make a mediaevalist of an undergraduate French major, but in no sense is an undergraduate degree in liberal arts supposed to give the student professional expertise. A student can study Chrétien de Troyes with as much profit as Balzac and is as capable of learning to read Old French as he is of wading through Eugénie Grandet, provided someone is willing to guide him. The result of incorporating Old French that seems most important to me is that the student's sense of purpose and direction are improved. He has been confronted with something that is difficult and strange at the outset and he has tried to learn about it. As a result of his study of the Middle Ages he sees the continuity of French Literature and finds his whole major more meaningful. If I were to redesign this program at present, I would be much more selective about the content of the courses, but attempt to preserve the orientation of the program as a whole.

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FRENCH 80

The History of the Language

3 cr.

OBJECTIVES: To acquaint the student with the history of the French language by means of a systematic study of the development of its external history, phonology, morphology and syntax.

TOPICAL OUTLINE:

I. General and external history
   A. Place in Romance group, Indoeuropean family
   B. Low Latin, Vulgar Latin, Romance, their development and spread
II. Phonology
   A. Vulgar Latin developments: stress, tone, quality
   B. Tonic vowels
   C. Counter-tonic vowels
   D. Yod, definition and effects
   E. Consonants, vocals
III. Morphology
   A. Perfects, strong and weak
   B. Habeo, facere
IV. Syntax

FOR: French majors and others by special permission of the Division of the Humanities.

PROCEDURE AND METHODS: Three lectures per week. One hour test and one final examination are required. There is no term paper, but some outside reading is required.

TEXT:

1. Frederic M. Wheelock, Latin, An Introductory Course Based on Ancient Authors. New York, 1964.
2. Alfred Ewert, The French Language, London, 1943.

FRENCH 90

DIRECTED STUDIES

"Mediaeval Studies"

OBJECTIVES: To introduce the student to Old French Literature. To give him an over-all view of the development and nature of the various literary genres through extensive reading and study of several of the classic works in the period.

TOPICAL OUTLINE:

I. The language: Morphology and Syntax to 1300, summary
II. The genres
  A. Prose
    Gloses de Cassel
    Serments de Strasbourg
    Saint Louis
    Tristan
  B. Poetry
    1. The epic
      Roland
      Gormund and Isembard
    2. Roman Breton
      Tristan
      Le Chevalier au Lion
    3. Fables: Marie de France
    4. Le Roman de la Rose
  C. Religious literature
    1. Narrative
      Ste. Eulalie
      St. Alexis
    2. Dramatic
      Adam
      Mystère de la Passion

FOR: French majors only or by special permission of the Division of the Humanities.

PROCEDURE AND METHODS: The student meets the instructor once a week to examine specific problems and to synthesize the information gleaned from his reading. A final examination is required, but no term paper.

TEXT: Karl Bartsch and Leo Wiese, Chrestomathie de l'ancien français, New York, 1958.

FRENCH 61

Survey of French Literature

3 cr.

OBJECTIVES: The student gains through this course a view of French Literature from the Middle Ages through the sixteenth century by means of a study of selections taken from representative works.

TOPICAL OUTLINE:

I. Middle Ages
- A. Les chansons de geste
  1. La Chanson de Roland
  2. Raoul de Cambrai
- B. La Littérature Courtoise
  1. Tristan et Iseut
  2. Chrétien de Troyes. Perceval ou le Conte du Graal
- C. La Littérature Satirique
  1. Le Roman de Renard
  2. Joinville
- D. Le Théâtre
  1. Le Jeu d'Adam
  2. La Farce de Maître Pathelin

II. Lyric Poetry in the 14th and 15th centuries: François Villon, selections; Eustache Deschamps, selections.

III. The 16th Century
- A. Clément Marot
- B. Calvin
- C. Rabelais
  1. Gargantua
  2. Pantagruel
  3. Le Tiers Livre
  4. Le Quart Livre
- D. La Pléïade

  Du Bellay

  Ronsard
  1. Les Odes
     a. "le bel aubépin ..."
     b. " à l'alouette ..."
  2. Amours de Cassandre, selections.
- E. Montaigne, selections from Les Essais

FOR: French majors and other interested persons who fulfill the prerequisites established by the Division of the Humanities.

PROCEDURE AND METHODS: Three lectures per week are given. "Explication" is given of most selections with biographical and textual information. The course is conducted in French. The student writes on the average, one "explication" per week. One hour test and a final examination are required.

TEXT:

1. André Lagarde and Laurent Michard, Les Grands auteurs français du programme. Le moyen âge. Vol. I. Paris, 1961.
2. _____. Les Grands auteurs français du programme. Le XVI^{e} siècle. Vol. II, Paris, 1961.
3. Gustave Lanson, Histoire de la littérature française, Paris, 1960.